THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN): (a) to (c) The Government have constituted the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), an expert body with powers, *inter-alia*, to fix prices and notify the changes therein, if any, of bulk drugs and formulations, from time to time under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 1995). Prices notified/fixed by the NPPA are applicable to manufacturers/ importers in all the States/Union Territories in the country.

VSS compensation to HFC and FCI ex-employees

514. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the training period followed by regular employment of ex-employees of HFC and FCI separated through VSS after closure of these units has been counted for the purpose of calculation of VSS compensation and statutory gratuity; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN): (a) No Sir.

(b) Inclusion or exclusion of the training period of the employees as part of regular employment is to be decided by the management of the PSU keeping in view the terms of appointment at the time of their induction. This falls within the purview of the enterprises. As VRS is available to the employees below board level, the managements of PSUs are competent to take decision in specific cases as per Service Rules/ conditions of the CPSU.

Ex-employees of HFC and FCI

515. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether after the closure of HFC and FCI, employees separated through VSS after completion of 30 years of service, have been granted 60 months salary as admissible as per clause 5(ii) of DPE's OM No. 2(32)/97-DPE(WC) dt. 5.5.2000; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN): (a) No Sir.

(b) The guidelines on the subject does not emphasise the fact that whoever has completed more than 30 years of service would automatically get 60 months of VR compensation. 60 months salary is only an upper ceiling which will act as a check for not allowing undue advantages to any VR optees. Hence, the computation of the VSS payment is required to be done @45 days of salary per completed year of service and is subject to the condition that will not exceed the salary/ wage for the balance period of service left at the rate of monthly salary/ wage at the time of voluntary retirement. This matter is *sub judice* before various High Courts.

Revival of public sector fertilizer units

516. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have contemplated to revive the closed public sector fertilizer units in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN): (a) to (c) In the light of the Government's Common Minimum Programme (CMP), the issue regarding the revival of the closed Fertilizer Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) is being re-examined based on market demand and their techno-economic viability.

Supply of fertilizers to States

517. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of fertilizer units in the country;

(b) the number of fertilizer units which have either closed down or have become sick within the period from 1999-2000 to 2003-2004;